PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Outlay during 1998-99 is Rs. 40 crs. and an amount of Rs. 2.05 crores has since been spent on the project.

(c) Does not arise.

Shifting of Western Railway Headquarters from Mumbai to Ahmedabad

2119. SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to shift the headquarters of Western Railway from Mumbai to Ahmedabad; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING & PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Gauge conversion of Railway lines in Saurashtra and Kachch region

2120. SHRI GOPALSINH G. SOLANKI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be plased to state:

(a) whether there have been inordinate delays in the conversion of Veraval-Rajkot meter gauge line in Saurashtra region and Bhuj-Gandhidham meter gauge line in Kachch region;

(b) whether they are proposed to be taken up during the Ninth Five Year Plan or in the current year's Railway budget;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any corrective measures have been taken by Government in that direction; and

(e) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) to (e) The works of gauge conversion of Rajkot-Veraval and Gandhidham-Bhuj are in progress.

There has been some delay due to constraint of resources. However, both the projects are planned to be completed within the 9th Five Year Plan, subject to availability of resources.

Introduction of Super Fast Express Trains

2121. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Super Fast Express trains introduced in 1997-98 in the country, giving names of Railway zones that they traverse;

(b) the rationale and logic of introducing Super Fast Express trains only in some zones;

(c) whether the demands of South-Central Railways and Andhra Pradesh have not been fairly and adequately considered in 1997-98;

(d) by when the Railways propose to meet the requirements of passengers in 1998-99 in Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAY, PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) Two pairs of Super Fast trains have been introduced during 1997-98; 2915/2916 Delhi-Ahmadabad Ashram Express serving Northern Railway & Western Railway and 2677/2678 Coimbatore-Bangalore Express over Southern Railway.

(b) Trains having average speed of 55 kmph or more on BG and 45 kmph or more on MG are classified as Super Fast trains irrespective of Zones.

(c) and (d) Railways do not introduce train State-wise. However, 7 pairs of Express trains including a bi-weekly Nizamuddin-Secunderabad Swarna Jayanti Rajdhani Express serving South-Central Railway have been introduced during 1997-98.

Introduction of a Fast Train Connecting Calcutta with Towns in North Bengal

2122. SHRI GURUDAS DAS GUPTA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering a proposal to introduce a fast train connecting Calcutta with the Towns in North Bengal; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS, PARLIAMEN-